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The High Water Mark

*Proceedings of a Dedication Ceremony
for a Monument to the 26th North Carolina Regiment
Gettysburg National Military Park
4 October 1986*



*Edited by
Archie K. Davis*

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Chapel Hill
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1986

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Dedication Ceremony
Monument to 26th North Carolina Regiment

Gettysburg National Military Park
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

October 4, 1986
2:00 P.M.

Prelude	26th North Carolina Regimental Band
Presiding	Archie K. Davis <i>President</i> <i>North Caroliniana Society</i>
The High Water Mark	Warren W. Hassler, Jr. <i>Professor of History Emeritus</i> <i>Pennsylvania State University</i>
Presentation of the Chief Justice	George Elliot London <i>President</i> <i>Carolina Charter Corporation</i>
Where They Left Their Dead	Joseph Branch <i>Chief Justice Emeritus</i> <i>North Carolina Supreme Court</i>
In Perpetuation	John R. Earnst <i>Superintendent</i> <i>Gettysburg National Military Park</i>
Postlude	26th North Carolina Regimental Band

Reactivated 26th North Carolina Regimental Band

Director

Samuel E. Fort, Jr.

Cornet

W. Raymond Weir, Jr.

Amos E. Speas

Dennis E. Fort

Gordon R. Kelley

Lillian F. Fort

Tuba

H. Brown Clodfelter

E flat Alto Horn

*William J. Leinbach

John D. Myers

Baritone Horn

A. Henry Holland

Jeff Whitsett

Tenor Horn

Robert C. Ward

J. Burton Snyder, Jr.

*Descendant of Julius A. Lineback [Leinbach] of the 26th Regimental Band at Gettysburg on 3 July 1863.

A Word About The Music

The tunes played at the dedication ceremony on 4 October 1986 all were from the period of the Battle of Gettysburg with the exception of the "26th Regimental Band March," which was composed in 1976 by Harold Mickey, grandson of Samuel T. Mickey, who was leader of the original 26th Regimental Band at Gettysburg in 1863.

Prelude

"26th Regimental Band March"

"The Girl I Left Behind Me"

"Lorina & Bright Smiles Quickstep"

"Oft in the Stilly Night"

"The Campbells Are Coming"

"Come Dearest, the Daylight Is Gone"

"Easter Galop"

"Home Sweet Home"

"Luto Quickstep"

"Juanita"

"Bonnie Blue Flag"

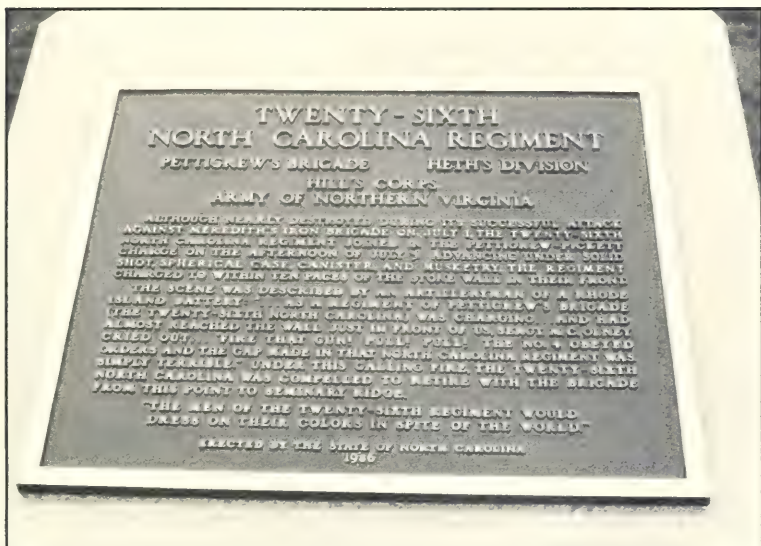
"The Old North State"

Postlude

"Dixie's Land"

"Battle Hymn of the Republic"

"Old Hundredth"



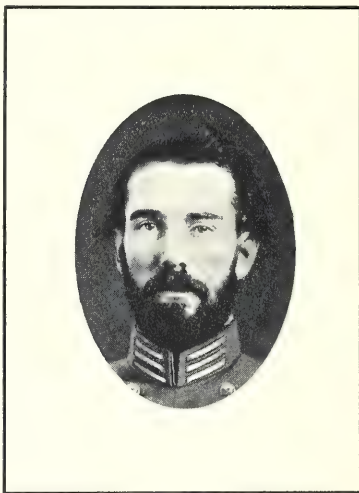
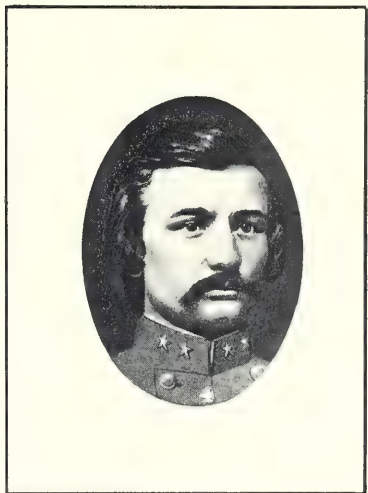
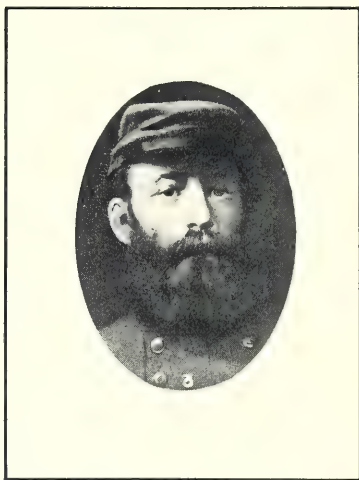
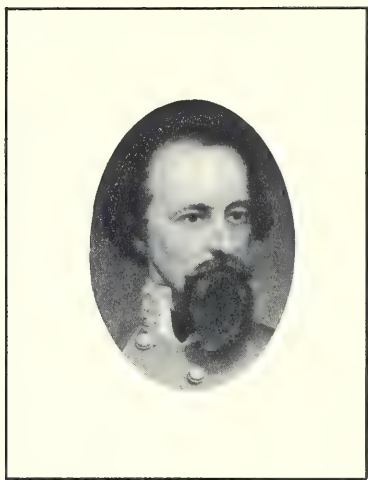
Crowd gathers for dedication ceremonies for monument to the 26th North Carolina Regiment. Lower photo shows fields across which the Confederates marched to meet the Federals, who were deployed behind the stone wall from which the picture was taken. Statue of General Robert E. Lee is in distant center. Tree at left is at "The Angle."



The Reactivated 26th North Carolina Regimental Band of Salem plays on the Confederate side of the stone wall (top), behind which the Federals waited. The picture at bottom, looking southwesterly across "The Angle," shows the band (left), monument, and a part of the approximately 300 people on the field during the ceremonies.



Photo at top shows program participants Superintendent John Earnst, Chief Justice Joseph Branch, George E. London, Warren W. Hassler, Jr., and Archie K. Davis. Posing with the monument at bottom are (left) Earnst, Branch and Davis; and (right) Lee I. Gorrell and L. R. Gorrell, descendants of Colonel John R. Lane, wounded on 1 July.



Left to right, top to bottom: General James Johnston Pettigrew, a native of Tyrrell County, and three successive commanders of the 26th Regiment—John R. Lane (wounded 1 July), John T. Jones (Lane's successor), and Stephen W. Brewer (succeeding Jones, who moved up to brigade commander in the midst of the battle on Cemetery Ridge).



Opening Remarks

Archie K. Davis, Presiding

Ladies and gentleman, distinguished guests: On behalf of the North Carolina Historical Commission and of the North Caroliniana Society, it is my pleasure to welcome you to another ceremony in honor of the 26th North Carolina Regiment.

On 5 October 1985, a number of us present here today were privileged to participate in a similar dedication ceremony to the 26th North Carolina on a more distant part of this historic battlefield. Both then and now much research and planning were involved, and we are indebted to many for their professional assistance and thoughtful cooperation. We are particularly grateful to John R. Earnst, superintendent of the Gettysburg National Military Park; James C. Roach, chief of interpretation; Kathleen Harrison and Robert Prosperi, research historians; and to the maintenance division for their excellent site preparation.

The monument being dedicated today, except for size and inscription, is identical to the one installed on Meredith Drive a year ago—the same Salisbury pink granite from Rowan County, North Carolina, but proportionately smaller by one-third—and bears the approval of the North Carolina Historical Commission, chaired by Danny G. Moody. We wish to thank members of the commission and Jerry C. Cashion and Michael R. Hill of the State Division of Archives and History for their most helpful cooperation. The division is a part of the State Department of Cultural Resources, headed by Patric Dorsey, and we are delighted to have her with us today. And far from least, H. G. Jones, curator of the North Carolina Collection and secretary-treasurer of the North Caroliniana Society, whose professional assistance will provide an appropriate record of this event for posterity.

We are honored once again by the presence of the Reactivated 26th North Carolina Regimental Band from Salem, under the direction of Samuel E. Fort, Jr. As was mentioned a year ago, this Moravian band is the oldest continuous mixed wind ensemble in America. It was attached

to the 26th North Carolina in March 1862 and remained with the regiment until Appomattox. The band played at Gettysburg 123 years ago and did much to revive the spirit of the men in the late afternoon and evening of the second day. As Captain Samuel Timothy Mickey later recalled, "We learned some time afterwards, from northern papers, that our playing had been heard by the enemy, amid the noise of the cannon, and that they had supposed with wonder that we were in the midst of the fight." I know you will join me in warmly applauding Sam Fort and the members of his band for providing such a delightful and appropriate musical setting for our ceremony.

Some members of this band and others in our audience are descended from those who fought and bled here under the banner of the gallant 26th North Carolina—a regiment that gained lasting fame on the bloody slopes of McPherson's Woods (now Reynolds' Grove) by crushing Meredith's Iron Brigade and forcing the Federals to fall back on Cemetery Ridge. That was on the afternoon of 1 July 1863. In perhaps less than an hour of fierce combat, this gallant regiment of Pettigrew's brigade lost 588 in killed and wounded out of 800 men engaged—among them Colonel Henry King Burgwyn, Jr., killed, and Lieutenant Colonel John Randolph Lane, severely wounded. Regimental command passed immediately to Major John Thomas Jones, who was later wounded but refused to leave the field. Within the hour the command had changed hands three times.

Two days later, and again in the afternoon, this remnant of the 26th North Carolina, about 200 men, took its position in the front line of the Pettigrew-Pickett charge (Longstreet's assault) on Cemetery Ridge. Pettigrew's division (Heth's) was on the left of the Confederate line and Pickett's division on the right. Pettigrew's old brigade was now commanded by Colonel James K. Marshall of the 52nd North Carolina. Major John T. Jones began the charge in command of the 26th, but within minutes succeeded Colonel Marshall, who was mortally wounded within a few paces of where we now stand. Captain S. W. Brewer of Company E succeeded Major Jones.

The fighting became so intense that only a few of the shattered 26th made it to this point, only to be literally blown away by an artillery blast of double grape and canister from a distance of less than fifteen paces. Barely seventy men were able to retrace their steps over the frightful 1,400 yards to the west that lay between them and some degree of safety behind Seminary Ridge. But the gallant 26th North Carolina had made its mark.

In these few remarks I have purposely concentrated on certain aspects of the 26th's involvement at Gettysburg, leaving the broader spectrum of the fateful third day to our friend, Warren W. Hassler, Jr., a true scholar and an outstanding authority on the Battle of Gettysburg. Having just concluded a long and distinguished career as professor of history at Pennsylvania State University, Dr. Hassler has graciously consented to join with us again in paying tribute to the valor of the 26th North Carolina here at Gettysburg.

A gifted writer and lecturer, he has brought renown to himself and to his profession by being an exceedingly busy and productive scholar, involving the publication of countless articles, book reviews, and several books. Among the latter have been the prize-winning work on General George B. McClellan and the popular *Crisis at the Crossroads: The First Day at Gettysburg*. His latest work, entitled *With Shield and Sword: American Military Affairs, Colonial Times to the Present*, represents a valuable contribution to our nation's military history from the 1600s to the present. In addition to all of this he has held visiting professorships at the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and at the United States Military Academy.

And finally, may I add, Dr. Hassler has, over the years, given invaluable assistance to his Southern friends from North Carolina in their effort to reconstruct the movements of the 26th from Herr Ridge to this precise point on Cemetery Ridge, often referred to as the "high water mark of the Confederacy." For this we are deeply grateful. Ladies and gentlemen, I am honored to present my distinguished friend, Warren W. Hassler, Jr.





The High Water Mark

Warren W. Hassler, Jr.

In his epic four-volume *History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, Winston Churchill declared that “the great American Civil War [was one] which must upon the whole be considered the noblest and least avoidable of all the great mass conflicts of which till then there was record.” Across the span of 123 years, the world’s leading military figures and statesmen have made the pilgrimage to the Gettysburg Battlefield, scene of the greatest combat ever fought in the Western Hemisphere. And after the captains and the kings have departed, the military historians have attempted to evaluate the pivotal battle fought here—often with limited results.

But the gallant soldiers in blue and in gray who contended here have left an imperishable record which speaks more eloquently than the chroniclers. In giving us this legacy, more enduring than bronze or granite, they gave the last full measure of devotion, memory of which will remain for all time.

“Gettysburg,” wrote historian John M. Vanderslice, “was, in a measure, the American soldiers’ battle, a battle of the ranks, a struggle of American prowess and courage, of discipline and tenacity, of unwavering fidelity and unselfish devotion, a contest of American manhood.” “Duty,” said Robert E. Lee, “is the most sublime word in the English language.” What we are today, as a people and as a nation, is largely the result of the contributions and sacrifices of those who have gone before. We will never forget them.

When the three-day Battle of Gettysburg opened on 1 July 1863, Robert E. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia numbered perhaps 75,000 troops. Pitted against it was George C. Meade’s Army of the Potomac, totaling some 93,000 men. In the desperate and often underestimated first day’s battle of some nine hours’ duration, the Southerners finally emerged victorious, driving the bluecoats back from the west and north of town to the powerful fishhook line occupied by the Nationals here on Cemetery

Ridge. In this hard-fought contest, the 26th North Carolina Regiment played a significant role in at last ousting Meredith's Iron Brigade from McPherson's Woods. In so doing, the 26th suffered catastrophic losses.

On the second day of battle, Lee's troops under Longstreet, in ferocious fighting, gained the Peach Orchard, the Devil's Den, and much of the Wheatfield on the southern end of the field, but failed to capture the vital Little Round Top. In the evening, although the spirited attack by the Louisiana Tigers against East Cemetery Hill was repelled, Confederate troops did secure a lodgment on the lower slopes of Culp's Hill on the extreme Union right.

In a famous council of war held after the second day's battle, Meade and his generals determined to stay in position and fight it out on the morrow. Lee, seeing that he had scored some gains on both flanks, and feeling that Meade must have denuded his center to some degree by shifting soldiers to both ends of his threatened line, decided to risk all with a mighty cannonade and infantry charge against the right-center of the Federal line. Longstreet objected futilely, saying there were never 15,000 men arrayed for battle who could carry the nearly impregnable position near the Copse of Trees.

July 3rd dawned hot and humid—the temperature was to reach eighty-seven degrees. The third day's battle opened at 4:00 A.M. on the Union right, where, after seven hours of bloody combat, the Federals succeeded in driving the Confederates off the slopes of Culp's Hill. In consultation with Longstreet, Lee evolved his plan of assault, which comprised brigades under the command of Pickett, Pettigrew, Trimble, and Wilcox.

The attacking Confederate force, from right to left, was composed of Pickett's brigades of Kemper and Garnett in the front line, supported in their immediate rear by Armistead; the later-moving brigades of Wilcox and Perry were to Pickett's right-rear. Then, on Pickett's left, from right to left, were Pettigrew's brigades of Archer, Marshall (formerly Pettigrew's, including the remnants of the 26th North Carolina), Davis, and Brockenbrough in the front line, supported immediately in the rear by Trimble's brigades, right to left, of Scales and Lane. There were perhaps up to 15,000 Confederates comprising Longstreet's Assault, as it is officially known. The entire grayclad column was composed of forty-two regiments: nineteen Virginia, fifteen North Carolina, three Mississippi, three Tennessee, and two Alabama. Over 138 Southern artillery pieces were deployed to support the infantry attack.

Some twenty-seven Federal regiments were in position to meet the grand assault. They were in Webb's Philadelphia Brigade of Pennsylvania regiments at the stone wall, Angle, and Clump of Trees just to the south of where we are located; in Hall's and Harrow's brigades to the south of the Copse; and in Hays's brigades of Smyth and Willard along the stone wall here from the upper angle to the Bryan barn on our north. Over eighty Union cannon supported the blueclad infantry. The Confederate and Federal artillery exceeded anything Napoleon had ever mustered half a century before. So this was the participating force of Union and Confederate soldiery that was poised for the fearful engagement; soon they would gain immortality.

There was a lull in the battle following the cessation of the fighting at Culp's Hill at 11:00 A.M. For two hours an ominous silence spread its wings over the fateful field. Noon passed; tension mounted. In the slight breeze from the west battle-flags hung almost limply from their staffs. The objective—the umbrella-shaped Clump of Trees and the wall to its north—had been pointed out and the orders given. The waiting Confederate soldiers talked quietly of casual things. Some stole a quick bite of food or sip of water; others gazed anxiously to the east toward Cemetery Ridge, here, where, with similar mixed emotions, lay their adversaries.

Then, at 1:00 P.M., the Washington Artillery of New Orleans, near the Peach Orchard, fired two quick shots in succession, and the Confederate cannon, soon answered by the Union, opened the heaviest artillery bombardment ever seen on the North American continent. For an hour and fifty minutes the countryside shook with the reverberations. Then, at approximately 3:00 P.M., came Longstreet's near-tearful nod which set the huge infantry juggernaut in motion. Pickett's division—formed in the low draw just east of Spangler's Woods—started marching forward, then had to oblique to the left toward the Copse. To the left, Pettigrew's troops—having farther to go than Pickett's—deployed behind the trees on the western slope of Seminary Ridge, began their advance promptly. "Now, colonel, for the honor of the good old North State, forward," cried Pettigrew. The grayclad lines, nearly a mile in length, presented a martial spectacle never forgotten by those who witnessed it. Union Lieutenant Frank A. Haskell thought it "an overwhelming resistless tide of an ocean of armed men sweeping upon us."

A heavy Federal artillery fire began to play upon Pickett, Pettigrew, and Trimble's brigades. When Pickett had completed his oblique march

toward the Clump of Trees, having covered more than half the distance to the objective, his left came into line with Pettigrew's right—a brilliantly successful and complicated maneuver of precise timing and execution. Near the Emmitsburg Road both Pettigrew's and Pickett's divisions stopped in a slight depression, that partially protected them from enemy fire, to rest momentarily and dress ranks. Then it was forward again.

"While the brigades of the Confederate line approached the Federal works in a well-dressed line," wrote Glenn Tucker, "the critical fighting moved from the Confederate right to the left and was without essential concert. Pickett's battle was waning as Pettigrew's began, and Pettigrew in turn had shot his bolt when Trimble put in his greatest effort. . . . The 'high-water mark' is more symbolic than actual, because the conformation of the Federal line [with the eighty-yard jog in the stone wall between the two angles] caused three of Pettigrew's and both of Trimble's brigades to strike the Northerners farther in advance than Pickett and nearer the summit of the ridge."

As the graycoats—now under an intense musketry fire, with men falling like autumn leaves—surged up the slope toward the stone wall, they loosed, for the first time, the high-pitched Rebel yell. To the south near the Clump of Trees and the Angle, some Virginians of Kemper's, Garnett's, and Armistead's brigades, and a few of Archer's Tennesseans and Alabamians, leaped across the stone wall and fought their way into the Copse and the more open area within the Angle. But it was all in vain for Pickett's heroic men as they were quickly engulfed by Union reinforcements in front and flank. And so were Wilcox's 1,100 Alabamians and Perry's 400 Floridians—who had started some ten minutes too late—on Pickett's right, south of the Codori buildings. The few surviving Southerners had to retreat.

Meanwhile, as Pettigrew's and Trimble's Confederates approached the stone wall here—held by Smyth's and Willard's brigades of Hays's division—the energetic Hays, to alleviate the idleness and growing apprehension of his blueclad troops, drilled his regiments, in his stentorian voice, in the manual of arms. As Marshall's brigade, including the 26th North Carolina, and Davis' brigade rushed past Pickett's brigades to assault the stone wall here, they were exposed to heavy fire on their right flank from Webb, in their front from Hays, on their left-oblique from the 108th New York and 126th New York near the Bryan barn, from Woodruff's battery in Ziegler's Grove, and on their left flank from the 8th Ohio. It was a maelstrom of fury and human destruction.

It will be noted that the 26th North Carolina attacked the steepest part of Cemetery Ridge, here at Arnold's Rhode Island battery. In front of this portion of the wall, Colonel Marshall, leading Pettigrew's brigade, was mortally wounded and captured. The command devolved upon Major Jones of the 26th, while that of the regiment passed to Captain S. W. Brewer of Company E. General Pettigrew's hand was shattered by a ball, but he paid no heed. There was no longer a line of battle remaining, but merely small groups of Confederates moving ahead under flags, halting now and then to fire back at the Federals who were, at some places, four deep behind the stone wall. As some North Carolinians of the 26th charged desperately toward Arnold's cannon, they were decimated by a terrible blast of double canister.

"The Twenty-sixth pressed quickly forward," wrote one of the few survivors of the unit, "and when the regiment reached within about forty yards of the enemy's works, it had been reduced to a skirmish line. But the brave remnant still pressed ahead and the colors were triumphantly planted on the works by J. M. Brooks and Daniel Thomas of Company E" before they had to yield. Human flesh and blood could do no more. But while a few intrepid soldiers of the 26th reached the stone wall, the main thrust of the regimental column, as a unit, with the rest of Marshall's brigade, reached a position some forty feet in front of the wall, where this handsome monument has now been erected. Also reaching the wall a few yards to our north were Lieutenant T. D. Falls, Sergeant Augustus Whitley, and Captain E. F. Satterfield and a few of his company of the 55th North Carolina, plus perhaps several courageous soldiers in both Pettigrew's and Trimble's divisions who were found dead or wounded in the Bryan orchard just to the east of the stone wall.

In the final action of the grand Confederate assault, in support of Pettigrew, Scales and Lane's brigades of North Carolinians under Trimble's command swept forward across the Emmitsburg Road, where Trimble was severely wounded, and surged ahead up the slope under a withering fire. Following behind Archer's regiments, some of Scales's men neared the Angle, while, to the north, Lane's remnants approached the stone wall. But, met by terrible musketry fire here in front and by musketry and cannon fire to the north, Trimble's command was shattered and compelled to withdraw, having suffered, as the others, enormous casualties.

Thus, the high water mark, the high tide of the Confederacy, had been reached. But, as the noted historian, James Ford Rhodes, exclaimed, " 'Breathes there the man with soul so dead' who would not thrill with

emotion to claim for his countrymen the men who made that charge and the men who met it?"

The harvest of the guns had indeed been fearful. Perhaps almost two-thirds of the attacking Confederates on the third day were casualties, while the Federals lost possibly one-fifth as many. The poignant record speaks hauntingly for itself. The grand assault of Pettigrew, Pickett, Trimble, and Wilcox had begun at approximately 3:00 P.M., and by about 4:00 the greatest infantry attack in American history was history.

The heritage of the soldiers in blue and in gray who struggled here at Gettysburg is a majestic and imperishable one, and in the Valhalla of American military endeavor, these heroic men have carved out, for themselves and for our posterity, a golden niche of human courage and devotion. Abraham Lincoln sensed this destiny-in-the-making when, speaking of the legacy of the Civil War in words which hold for all of us today, he said, "We cannot escape history. We . . . will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance, or insignificance, can spare one or another of us. The . . . trials through which we [now] pass, will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation. . . . We . . . hold the power, and bear the responsibilities. We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope of earth."





Further Remarks and Introduction

Archie K. Davis, Presiding

Thank you, Dr. Hassler. We are indeed grateful for your stirring account of the men in blue and gray who fought so courageously along this line on the crest of Cemetery Ridge.

Your reference to this being the high water mark of the Confederacy brings to mind a fascinating subject, which was formally addressed at a meeting of the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association in Raleigh on 12 November 1903. At that time a resolution was adopted naming seven members, including Chief Justice Walter Clark as chairman and Senator Henry A. London as secretary, to act as a committee "to investigate and report upon the accuracy of North Carolina's claim as to the number of troops furnished by this State to the Confederacy, and upon the merits of our claim as to 'First at Bethel, Farthest at Gettysburg and Chickamauga, Last at Appomattox.' "

This resolution was prompted by remarks made earlier by Judge George L. Christian of Richmond at a meeting of the Grand Camp of the Virginia Confederate Veterans, in which he had questioned "the claims made by North Carolina as to her record in the War for Southern Independence." That statement could not go unchallenged, and it was Colonel J. Bryan Grimes, speaking in support of the resolution, who left for posterity this memorable peroration: "Whenever Virginia has suffered North Carolina has bled. We would disdain to pluck one laurel from Virginia's brow—we love her still—but we say calmly to our beloved sister that she must pause and give us justice. We are worthy of our appropriate motto *Esse Quam Videri*, and we are ready to prove our claim."

One year later the committee's report was published. Entitled *Five Points in the Record of North Carolina in the Great War of 1861-5*, the report concluded that the state was justified in its claims. The General Assembly quickly authorized the appointment of commissioners for the placement of tablets at three specific sites. By mid-November 1905, appropriate memorials had been placed at Appomattox, Bethel, and Chickamauga.

To this day, however, no monument has been erected at Gettysburg marking the farthest point reached by the North Carolina troops on the third day, but—I hasten to add—not for want of effort. Even as recently as 1921, Chief Justice Clark, whose brilliance was exceeded only by his indomitable will, was still proclaiming. In a speech entitled “North Carolina Troops at Gettysburg,” delivered before the North Carolina Confederate Veterans Association in Durham on the 24th of August, he stated categorically that “the North Carolinians beyond all question went farthest to the front at Gettysburg.” The convention petitioned the legislature to authorize the State Historical Commission to mark the spot with an appropriate tablet and inscription.

This idea was probably conceived in 1893, when Justice Clark, at the request of Federal authorities, was named to a commission of Confederate soldiers to assist in locating the position of Confederate troops at both Sharpsburg and Gettysburg. It was reaffirmed and formalized the following year when the North Carolina Confederate Veterans Association sponsored a history of each North Carolina regiment and organization which had served in the Confederate Army, the study to be supervised and edited by Justice Walter Clark. Seven years later, this monumental work, consisting of five volumes, was published. On the cover of each volume were the lines which told the story of North Carolina’s “fidelity to duty”:

FIRST AT BETHEL
FARTHEST TO THE FRONT AT GETTYSBURG
AND CHICKAMAUGA
LAST AT APPOMATTOX

And it was with particular pride that Clark cited the report of his friend, Major Henry A. London, who emphasized that the three brigades which lost more killed than any others in the battle of Gettysburg were Pettigrew’s North Carolinians, and that the immortal 26th suffered “the heaviest loss of any regiment in either army in any battle of the war.”

Both Walter Clark and Henry London were veterans. Clark had volunteered in the summer of 1861. He was only fourteen at the time. The following year he fought at Harper’s Ferry and in the battles of Sharpsburg and Fredericksburg. Resigning his commission in February 1863, he entered the University of North Carolina from which he graduated with honors the following year. He reenlisted in the Junior Reserves, was commissioned a lieutenant-colonel and served with distinction until the end of the war.

Henry London left the University in the fall of 1864 to join the Confederacy. He was eighteen, and it was his senior year. Assigned as a courier to the staff of Major-General Bryan Grimes, it was his lot to participate in the last Confederate charge at Appomattox. And forty years later, as chairman of the North Carolina Appomattox Commission, he would return to that historic site to preside at the unveiling of North Carolina's monument.

Now, eighty years later, it is a happy circumstance that Major Henry A. London's grandson, George Elliot London, can join with us in this dedication ceremony on Cemetery Ridge. He bears the name of a family that has served the state of North Carolina with honor and distinction for generations. For him, public service has long been a matter of first priority, especially in those organizations concerned with the history and culture of our state—and always in a leadership role. For a number of years he has served as president of the Carolina Charter Corporation, a private support group for the publishing of a new series of the *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, which has recovered over 40,000 items, heretofore unknown and unavailable, through the research of scholars stationed in London and elsewhere. George London's dedication to this and other noteworthy projects is not only the measure of a great and good man but of his intense devotion to his native state.

Chief Justice Walter Clark would have been gratified to know that the grandson of Major Henry A. London would one day, and at long last, introduce another chief justice of North Carolina, who would participate in the dedication of a memorial to a North Carolina regiment "in front of the high stone wall north of the angle and 80 yards farther east."

It is with profound pride and satisfaction that I present to you my old friend and fellow historian in spirit, George Elliot London.





Introduction of Chief Justice Branch

George Elliot London

Thank you, Archie, for your generous remarks about my grandfather—and also about his grandson. Both Judge Clark and my grandfather were typical of the age level of thousands of boy soldiers who served in the Southern Army. They were teenagers when they entered the army—Clark having been a drill master at fourteen—and when the war was over they were still in their teens.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have a small role in the dedication of the monument to the immortal 26th North Carolina Regiment. It is particularly pleasing to have the privilege of introducing the chief justice of the Supreme Court of North Carolina who has just completed seven years of outstanding service in that capacity following thirteen years as an associate justice.

One of North Carolina's most distinguished citizens, lawyers, and jurists, his honors and degrees are too numerous to list here. However, two that should be mentioned are the North Carolina Citizens for Business and Industry Award for 1986 and the Outstanding Appellate Judge Award for 1981–82, the latter presented by the North Carolina Academy of Trial Lawyers.

When last summer at the annual meeting of the North Carolina Bar Association he announced his farewell with his intention to retire on 1 September, there was a long and emotional standing ovation by the thousand lawyers, judges, and court officials gathered there.

There followed many heartfelt tributes by his colleagues, such as "He was probably the most popular chief justice in modern times." One associate justice said, "Through his personality and kindness he has been able to keep the court together and allow us to disagree without being disagreeable." There was general agreement about his genuine concern for the state's youth and his productive activity in trying to deal with the *causes* of crime.

At Wake Forest College he *learned* the law, as a practicing attorney he *applied* the law, as a state representative he *legislated* the law, on the Supreme Court he *interpreted* the law, and as chief justice he guided the court through legal mine fields with strict and fair minded skill.

The personification of Justice, his quiet and unpretentious modesty projects an image more of *public servant* than *public figure*.

One fellow judge summed it all up in referring to the human touch when he said, "He doesn't come across as the chief justice; he comes across as being Joe Branch." He is a class act.

Ladies and gentlemen, The Honorable Joe Branch.





Where They Left Their Dead

Joseph Branch

Thank you, George, for your most gracious introduction. Mr. Chairman, Superintendent Earnst, ladies and gentlemen: The inimitable Chief Justice Walter Clark should be standing in my place today; for it was he who dreamed of a monument that would some day mark the farthest advance of the North Carolina troops at Gettysburg on the third day, and it was he who pursued the idea relentlessly until his death. So I am doubly honored, as a former chief justice of the Supreme Court of North Carolina, to have this privilege of participating in such a meaningful ceremony on behalf of my state.

I must say that I approached this assignment with some reluctance, for I am not a student of the Civil War, but my judicial training and temperament have encouraged me to seek out witnesses of the past and to study the evidence with care. Without further deliberation, my first and final conclusion is that none went farther up Cemetery Ridge than did the troops under General James Johnston Pettigrew—including the 26th North Carolina. In Archie's introduction of George London the clue was provided when reference was made to our participating in a memorial ceremony "in front of the high stone wall north of the angle and 80 yards farther east." We are standing on that ground today.

These words were taken from the inscription on a bronze tablet memorializing the Pettigrew Brigade, which was erected on Seminary Ridge in 1902. They were written by Major William M. Robbins, secretary of the Gettysburg Battlefield Commission. Major Robbins was the only Southerner on the commission. Although born and raised in North Carolina, he was residing in Alabama at the outbreak of the war. He enlisted in the "Marion Light Infantry," Company G, of the 4th Alabama Regiment, fought in campaigns in Tennessee and at Gettysburg, was severely wounded at the Battle of the Wilderness, and surrendered as a major at Appomattox Court House. When Robbins was appointed to the Gettysburg Battlefield Commission in 1894, he was practicing law in Statesville and was considered

one of North Carolina's outstanding citizens, having served with distinction in the state senate and as a congressman from the Seventh District.

One of his gifts to posterity is to be found in the priceless William M. Robbins Journals—now in the Southern Historical Collection—that provide intimate details of his wide-ranging responsibilities as secretary of the commission. During the course of his ten-year tenure he became an authority on the intricacies of the battlefield, which he toured almost daily, and generally in company with veterans. This added greatly to the ability of the commission to verify and establish accurate battery and infantry positions for appropriate memorials.

In 1901, Robbins prepared a draft of rules concerning monuments and markers on the field, and the following year he wrote the inscriptions and established the locations for eighteen brigade tablets to be erected on the newly constructed West Confederate Avenue on Seminary Ridge. It was but natural that he would become involved in the Pickett-Pettigrew controversy over who went “farthest to the front” at Gettysburg, obviously involving detailed correspondence and conferences with Judge Christian of Richmond and Chief Justice Walter Clark of Raleigh.

Major Robbins was both master and mediator. To Judge Christian, who was planning to write the “Va. View of the 3rd Day's Assault,” he emphasized that “the left of Pickett & the right of Pettigrew & Trimble pushed forward and went equally far,” as indicated by the testimony of impartial Union witnesses and the front line of the Confederate dead. He undoubtedly referred Walter Clark to the inscription on the Pettigrew Brigade tablet on Seminary Ridge, dated 2 May 1902, which read in part:

In Longstreet's assault this brigade occupied the right center of the division and the course of the charge brought it in front of the high stone wall north of the angle and 80 yards farther east. It advanced very nearly to that wall. A few reached it, but were captured. . . .

At Justice Clark's request, Major Robbins prepared an article entitled “Longstreet's Assault at Gettysburg” for inclusion in the fifth volume of his regimental history. Robbins concluded his impartial observations by stating: “The simple, honest truth is that Pickett's Virginians did as nobly as they and their friends have ever claimed, and the North Carolinians, Tennesseans, Alabamians and Mississippians, under Pettigrew and Trimble, did fully as well.” There is no indication that Clark ever questioned this conclusion. It is significant that in his committee report, issued on 18

October 1904, he categorically stated that the inscription on the Pettigrew Brigade tablet "vindicates the justice of our claim."

So our presence here today, Mr. Superintendent, has no bearing on the Pettigrew-Pickett controversy or on who went "farthest to the front." Our fellow North Carolinian, Major William M. Robbins, officially resolved that issue eighty-four years ago. We are here simply to pay tribute to the nobility and courage of the men of the 26th North Carolina, who fought and died here on the battlefield of Gettysburg.

From this day forward may their record of unmatched courage and devotion to duty be forever enshrined in the majesty and simplicity of this piece of granite from their native state of North Carolina. Within a period of forty-eight hours, at least 708 out of 800 engaged were killed, wounded, or missing. Of the thirty-nine officers, thirty-four were killed or wounded. Of the seventeen men who served in the color guard, including volunteers, seven were killed and ten wounded. According to Colonel William F. Fox, a noted authority on Civil War casualties, the 26th sustained the heaviest loss of any regiment on either side in any battle during the entire war.

In truth, our ceremony here today provides a poignant and meaningful example of historic continuity, the melding of the past into the present, and the inspiration that can flow from the knowledge of the past. How else can one interpret the words of Colonel John R. Lane, as he spoke to the members of the North Carolina Society of Baltimore at Gettysburg on 3 July 1903, only a few yards from where we are now assembled. Addressing himself to his fallen comrades, as if they were standing in his presence, his closing remarks were filled with emotion as he proclaimed:

My comrades, count it not idle that your remains lie on foreign soil. It is foreign soil no more. We lost our cause but we have won back our place in the American Union. Pennsylvania and North Carolina are sisters now and like a sister, Pennsylvania is caring for you. . . . Year by year the relentless temper of war is giving way to gentle tones of brotherhood and peace. Your valor is coming to be regarded as the common heritage of the American Nation. It no longer belongs to your state alone; it no longer belongs to the South; it is the high water mark of what Americans have done and can do. . . . Your deeds challenge the wonder of mankind. You have brought everlasting renown on your native state and the dear old 26th North Carolina.

Superintendent Earnst, on behalf of the North Carolina Historical Commission and of the state of North Carolina, it is my high privilege to present this memorial to the custody of the Gettysburg National Military Park.





In Perpetuation

John R. Earnst

Major John Lane's sentiments indeed reinforce the idea that here, in the Keystone State, the blood of Pennsylvania and North Carolina cemented forever the arch of an indestructible union. While the memories of what happened here in July 1863 are fondly cherished forever in the hearts of all the sons and daughters of North Carolina, Pennsylvania and all her sister states enjoy the sacred trust of guarding this marker—the outward symbol of that memory—and perpetuating the lives of those men who we can see in our minds' eye doing, daring, and dying for their state.

Within this solid granite, cut from the bed rock of the Old North State, is planted part of the heart of the 26th North Carolina. This marker, though beautiful in its proportions and workmanship, is of little intrinsic value, but who can estimate what it cost to lay the foundations for its erection? As we look upon it we see and read much more than the simple and appropriate inscription. It represents great sacrifices—sacrifices so great that they cannot be computed—sacrifices, the cost of which lies outside the domain of any arithmetic. It represents the scattered graves of North Carolina's sons who died for the love of their native state. This marker will bear perpetual testimony to their devotion to a cause which they loved better than their lives.

It stands not only for the dead, but for the living as well, quickening our sense of duty, stimulating our patriotism, and making it impossible that the memory of such sacrifices should perish from the hearts of men. It will stand long after we have passed away, to speak with persuasive voice to generations yet unborn, educating them in all that pertains to the safety, prosperity, and perpetuity of our country, and inspiring them with exalted patriotism and an unflinching courage in the defense of her institutions.

Bear back with you to your halls and homes and hills, and to the descendants of those men who fought here, the assurance that Gettys-

burg National Military Park will hold sacred and will forever guard in trust this marker to the valor of the 26th North Carolina Regiment.

True men they fell; and faithful to the last,
Though overpowered by death, yet still in death unconquered,
Forever sacred be their memories,
And imperishable, their heroic names.*



[The Reactivated 26th North Carolina Regimental Band followed with the playing of “Dixie’s Land” and “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.”]



*From address of First Lieutenant Ell Torrance at the dedication of a monument to the 38th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, 11 September 1889.

North Caroliniana Society, Inc.

North Carolina Collection
UNC Library 024-A
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Chartered on September 11, 1975, as a private nonprofit corporation under provisions of Chapter 55A of the *General Statutes of North Carolina*, the North Caroliniana Society has as its main purpose the promotion of increased knowledge and appreciation of North Carolina heritage through studies, publications, meetings, seminars, and other programs, especially through assistance to the North Carolina Collection of The University of North Carolina Library in the acquisition, preservation, care, use and display of, and the promotion of interest in, historical and literary materials relating to North Carolina and North Carolinians. The Society, a tax-exempt organization under provisions of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, depends upon the contributions, bequests, and devises of its members and friends.

Unofficially limited to one hundred North Carolinians who have contributed significantly to the state, the Society elects additional individuals meeting its criterion of "adjudged performance," thus bringing together men and women who have shown their respect for and commitment to our state's unique historical, literary, and cultural inheritance.

A highlight of the Society's year is the presentation of the North Caroliniana Society Award to an individual adjudged to have given unusually distinguished service over a period of years to the encouragement, promotion, enhancement, production, and preservation of North Caroliniana.

The North Carolina Collection, the headquarters for the North Caroliniana Society, has been called the "Conscience of North Carolina," for it seeks to preserve for present and future generations all that has been or is published about the state and its localities and people or by North Carolinians, regardless of subject. In this mission the Collection's clientele is broader than the University community; indeed, it is the entire citizenry of North Carolina as well as those outside the state whose research extends to North Carolina or North Carolinians. Its acquisitions are made possible by gifts and private endowment funds; thus, it also represents the respect that North Carolinians have for their heritage. Members of the North Caroliniana Society have a very special relationship to this unique institution which traces its beginnings back to 1844 and which is unchallenged as the outstanding collection of printed North Caroliniana in existence. A leaflet, "North Carolina's Literary Heritage," is available without charge from the Collection.

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